

# **BYLAWS OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF DES MOINES**

The following Bylaws of the First Unitarian Church were duly approved at a properly called special meeting of the Membership on May 6, 1979, and subsequently adopted by the Board of Trustees, as provided by the Articles of Incorporation, and as amended May 17, 1992, May 15, 1994, May 21, 1995, May 18, 1997, May 16, 1999, and May 21, 2001. These bylaws were edited to remove accumulated strike-through modifications and underscoring on additional language on March 16, 2005. Additionally, changes made in June 2005, and approved on June, 4 2006 are incorporated in this version. These Bylaws were amended and approved June 6, 2010. They were again amended and approved at the Annual Meeting on June 5, 2011. Amendments to Article IX: Committees, Section 2: Standing Committees were approved at the Annual Meeting on June 4, 2017. Also, changes approved on June 3, 2018 and June 5, 2022 are incorporated in this version.

## ***ARTICLE I: Name***

The name of this corporation shall be:

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF DES MOINES, IOWA

## ***ARTICLE II: Purpose***

The purpose of this corporation is to implement the commitment of the members as proclaimed in the Bond of Union:

"We associate ourselves together for the study and practice of morality and religion, as interpreted by the growing thought and noblest lives of humanity, hoping thereby to prove helpful one to another and to promote truth, righteousness and love in the world."

## ***ARTICLE III: Membership***

### ***Section 1: Becoming a member***

There shall be no creedal test, explicit or implied, for membership. Individuals who are 16 years of age or older may obtain membership status by ascribing to the purpose set forth by Article II (The Bond of Union) and completing the following steps:

- a. Participate in the path to membership process;
- b. File a pledge and pay the first installment of the pledge; and,
- c. Sign the Membership Book in the presence of a member.

### ***Section 2: Continuing membership***

- a. Membership continues as long as the member remains in covenant and has made a financial contribution of record during the fiscal year (or has been granted a waiver). A member is in covenant who honors our shared values (the Seven UU Principles and our Bond of Union) in our relationships with one another.

### ***Section 3: Membership Reports***

The Senior Minister shall verify the member list annually and report findings to the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 4: Resigning Membership***

A member may resign at any time by notice to the church office.

## **ARTICLE IV: Meetings**

### **Section 1: Annual Meeting**

An annual meeting of the membership of the Church shall be held prior to July 1 at the time and place that the Board of Trustees shall designate. The purposes of the meeting shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Presentation of annual reports;
- b. Election of Trustees and Endowment Development Committee;
- c. Adoption of a budget for the next fiscal year;
- d. Discussion and vote on resolutions presented; and
- e. Transaction of other business, which may come before the meeting.

### **Section 2: Special Meetings**

A special meeting of the Members may be called for any purpose any time by:

- a. A majority vote of the Board of Trustees; or
- b. Shall be called by a petition, so requesting, signed by at least fifteen (15) percent of members and presented to a Trustee.

Action taken at a special meeting shall be limited to the issue or issues that are set forth in the notice.

### **Section 3: Resolutions**

A resolution can be proposed by the Board, or subject to the following conditions, can be proposed by members and placed on the agenda of an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting if the resolution:

- a. Identifies where the proposed action fits with then-current goals of the church as determined by the Board of Trustees with membership input.
- b. Is accompanied by a petition containing the signatures of at least ten percent of the members.
- c. Specifies any church committees and/or employees affected by the proposed action as determined in consultation with the Senior Minister.
- d. Includes a discussion of any costs involved.
- e. Includes any staff and/or volunteer requirements.
- f. Includes a summary of at least two meetings led by an impartial facilitator.
- g. Is submitted to the Board Secretary at least 21 days in advance of the deadline for annual and special meeting notices.

### **Section 4: Notice**

Notice of each annual or special meeting shall be given by mailing notices to members at least two weeks before a meeting. The notice shall include:

- a. The time, place and purpose of the meeting;
- b. The proposed agenda;
- c. The text of any resolution duly presented to the secretary; and,
- d. At the annual congregational meeting, the names of candidates proposed by the Nomination Committee and the name of any Board member whom the Board selected to fill a vacancy on the Board since the last annual meeting (as provided in Art. V. Section 3).

### **Section 5: Quorum**

Fifteen percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum of any annual or special meeting except as provided elsewhere in these bylaws, but a smaller number may meet and record an adjournment.

**Section 6: Responsibilities of the Membership**

The membership shall elect the Trustees of the Board and members of the Endowment Committee, appoint or discharge the minister, buy, sell, or encumber real property of the Church, approve the Church budget and any other matters as may be brought to its attention by the Board of Trustees or the membership at a meeting duly called.

**Section 7: Voting**

Action on any matter to come before the membership at an annual or special meeting shall be by a majority of those members present and voting except as expressly provided otherwise in these Bylaws. The Board may elect to authorize by resolution the use of absentee ballots for voting on agenda issues at any congregational meeting.

**ARTICLE V: Board of Trustees**

**Section 1: Membership**

The Board of Trustees of this church shall consist of nine (9) church members, elected for terms of three years; three (3) of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting. Terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. No person who has served as a Trustee for a term of three years shall be eligible for re-election until one year after the expiration of that Trustee's term.

**Section 2: General Powers**

The Board of Trustees shall be the legal representative of the Church, and shall have general charge of its business subject to the will of the membership. The Board of Trustees may adopt such rules and policies for the transaction of its business and of the Church as it may determine. In addition to other authority granted in these bylaws, the Board has authority to appoint individuals to act on behalf of the congregation in various capacities, including voting delegates at assemblies and meetings of the Unitarian Universalist Association and affiliated organizations.

**Section 3: Removal and Vacancies**

Trustees may be removed by a majority vote at an annual or special meeting, at which time a replacement shall be elected to serve out the remaining term. Notice stating the proposed removal, which complies with Article IV, shall be given before the meeting.

In the event of a vacancy on the Board, other than removal of a trustee by a vote of the members, the remaining Trustees shall appoint a successor to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting at which time a replacement shall be elected in accordance with Article IV, to serve out the remaining term.

**Section 4: Regular Meetings**

The Board of Trustees shall hold a meeting at least once each month at a time and place it determines. The Board may allow virtual or telephonic Board member participation. Notice of the regular time and place of such meetings shall be published to the membership at the start of each fiscal year and whenever the regular time or place is changed. At such meetings, five (5) Trustees shall constitute a quorum. Board meetings shall be open to all members except for an annual Board retreat and any portion of a meeting held in executive session.

**Section 5: Special Meetings**

Any two members of the Board may call a Special Board meeting, which shall be scheduled for a date and time sufficient to provide reasonable notice to Board members

and to the Membership. A Special Board meeting may be held via virtual or telephonic means without in-person participation. Notice of Special Board meetings shall include a proposed meeting agenda and a reasonable means for the membership to attend a meeting that is held virtually or by telephone.

### ***Section 6: Minutes***

The minutes of the Board meetings shall show the results of each vote taken and information sufficient to indicate the vote of each member present. The Board shall keep the membership informed of the Board's decisions and actions.

## ***ARTICLE VI: Officers***

### ***Section 1: Officers and Officer Selection***

The Board of Trustees selects its own officers, who shall also serve as congregational officers according to the following procedures.

- a. The Board shall meet each year, after the annual congregational meeting and before July 1 to select officers for the coming year. The term of those selected shall begin July 1, and end June 30 of the following year.
- b. The officers of the congregation to be chosen shall be current Board members and shall include: President, Vice President, and Secretary.

### ***Section 2: Duties of the President***

The President shall be the principal executive officer of the corporation and shall preside as the chairperson at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and of the membership. The job of the President is to assure the integrity of the Board's process. The President is the official spokesperson for the Board.

The President, along with the other officers, shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Trustees either formally or informally.

### ***Section 3: Duties of the Vice President***

The Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President and shall be responsible for such other duties as may be required by the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 4: Duties of the Secretary***

The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- a. The creation and preservation of the minutes of all meetings of the membership and of the Board of Trustees;
- b. the giving of all notices as required by law and these Bylaws; and
- c. such other duties as may be required by the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 5: Removal***

Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees may be removed by the Board of Trustees whenever, in its judgment, it is in the best interest of the Church.

## ***ARTICLE VII: Property***

### ***Section 1: Real Estate***

Buying, selling or encumbering of real estate shall be approved at the annual meeting or a special meeting of the membership called for such purpose.

### ***Section 2: Checks and Drafts***

All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money issued in the name of the Church shall be signed in the manner determined by a resolution of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 3: Deposits**

All funds of the corporation shall be regularly and promptly deposited to the credit of the Church in financial institutions as approved by the Board of Trustees.  
No funds shall be expended for purposes of the Church without first being deposited to its order and drawn upon as provided herein.

**ARTICLE VIII: Senior Minister**

**Section 1: Selection**

The process for calling a senior minister shall begin with the selection of the Ministerial Search Committee by the members. The Ministerial Search Committee shall recommend a ministerial candidate to the congregation. That recommendation shall be considered at a congregational meeting duly called for that specific purpose.

A congregational meeting to approve a senior ministerial candidate recommendation requires an extraordinary quorum of twenty-five (25) percent of the membership present, or represented by absentee votes, if such an absentee process is authorized by the board.

Approval of a senior ministerial candidate shall require an extraordinary affirmative two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast.

**Section 2: Dismissal**

A majority vote of the membership shall be necessary for the dismissal of the senior minister of this Church. The Board may authorize absentee voting for this process, consistent with other notice and meeting provisions of these bylaws.

**Section 3: Settlement**

The terms of settlement with such senior minister shall be negotiated by the Ministerial Negotiating Committee, members of which are approved by vote of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 4: Duties**

- a. The Senior Minister reports to the Board of Trustees regarding progress toward the overall achievement of then-current goals of the church as determined by the Board of Trustees with membership input and shall:
- b. Be a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister may serve as a non-voting member of any affiliated committee or group.
- c. Have the freedom of the pulpit and elsewhere to express opinions.

**Section 5: Evaluation**

The annual evaluation of the minister will be conducted in a manner prescribed by the Board of Trustees.

**ARTICLE IX: Committees**

**Section 1: General procedures for committees**

The Board of Trustees retains authority, within the terms of provisions stated in these bylaws, to review activities and policies, and committee membership of all committees of the church. The Board of Trustees may relieve the Chairperson and membership of standing and special committees appointed by the Board as it is deemed necessary for carrying out the Church Purpose. Committees and their respective areas of responsibility

and duties, beyond that addressed in the bylaws, may be designated by resolution of the Board of Trustees.

### **Section 2: Standing Committees**

- a. **Nominating Committee.** Shall consist of five (5) members, two (2) of whom shall be members of the Board of Trustees and three (3) of whom shall be appointed by the Board from the church membership.
- b. **Endowment Committees** – Members to be selected as provided for in Article III, item 1 of the Endowment fund Bylaws as amended on June 4, 2017.
- c. **Ministerial Search Committee.** The Ministerial Search Committee shall be activated in the event of a senior ministerial vacancy. The Committee shall consist of seven members elected by the church membership. The committee chairperson shall be elected by the committee members.

### **Section 3: Other standing committees of the congregation**

The Board shall establish, by resolution, other standing or ongoing committees necessary to achieve congregational goals and missions. These committees shall continue on an ongoing basis unless terminated by Board action, and may determine their own membership. These committees shall conform to Board policies and procedures on major program or budgetary initiatives.

### **Section 4: Ad-hoc or specialized temporary committees**

Additional ad-hoc or specialized committees may be created from time to time to assist the congregation in carrying out its mission and achieving its vision. Creation of such committees shall be approved by the Board of Trustees for either a specified period of time, or for completion of a specified purpose, and will end when that time or purpose is completed.

## **ARTICLE X: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church corporation shall commence the first day of July and end the thirtieth day of June each year.

## **ARTICLE XI: Amendments**

Amendment to these Bylaws may be made at an annual or special meeting by a majority of those members present and voting, providing the proposed amendment shall have been fully set forth in the notice for the meeting in which it is to be considered. All members shall have been mailed or given written notice of the intention for the adoption of such amendment two weeks prior to such meeting.

## **ARTICLE XII: Affiliation**

This church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## **ARTICLE XIII: Inclusion**

### **Section 1: Nondiscrimination**

We affirm and promote the full participation of persons in all of our activities including membership, programming, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals

without regard to race, gender, physical challenge, class, ethnicity, age, national origin, affectional or sexual orientation, or family choice.

***Section 2: Equal Opportunity***

Cognizant of the results of historical discrimination, this Church affirms that it is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

***ARTICLE XIV: Parliamentary Procedure***

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be the parliamentary rules of procedure governing all meetings of the church when not in conflict with the Articles of Incorporation.

***ARTICLE XV: Notice***

Any communication required herein to be mailed to members may be completed by U.S. Postal or electronic means.